



## SAN DIEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY

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June 26, 2002

Council Member Scott Peters  
San Diego City Council  
202 C Street  
San Diego, CA 92101

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**Re: North Torrey Pines Road Bridge Replacement Project, LDR No. 98-0335**

Dear Mr. Peters:

The San Diego Audubon Society has reviewed the Torrey Pines Bridge Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) and finds that we can support this project. It is clear that the existing bridge is antiquated and unsafe; it must be replaced. Even though we do not agree with all aspects of the new design, the proposed replacement structure and related features of the project will provide a significant enhancement over the current structure. We would have preferred a longer, narrower bridge, but understand that issues of cost and traffic flow during construction preclude such a design.

The Torrey Pines Community Plan calls for the bridge to be striped for two lanes (even though it will be widened to three lanes) until northern road improvements are constructed. We feel this provision in the Community Plan should be implemented. This will maintain a consistent two lane configuration for Torrey Pines Road from south of the new bridge, until north of the railroad bridge where the three lane configuration resumes.

Audubon concurs with the findings in the MND that flushing action in the Lagoon will be improved once the old support columns are removed and replaced by the two bent, four column design. This should reduce and hopefully eliminate the need for periodic clearing of sediment buildup at the lagoon mouth. However, if blockage continues to be a problem, we strongly recommend that the City of San Diego continue to fully fund this procedure.

There is one feature of the bridge design that should be clarified. The image of the proposed bridge, as depicted in color handout, shows a slightly arched support structure while the drawing in Figure 3C of the MND indicates a straight box beam design. Which image is correct? While the arched design is more esthetically pleasing, the curvature must not be so extreme as to significantly increase shading under the bridge. Excessive shading could have a negative impact on marine life.

The new bridge will enhance public beach access through improved bus stops and design features for the disabled. The ability of all citizens to enjoy this recreational area will be increased, but the close proximity of Los Peñasquitos Lagoon requires that there be a careful balance between human recreation and wildlife protection. Accordingly, careful environmental monitoring during the construction process and afterward must take place.

Overall, the design of this bridge has been improved and enhanced through the process of public review as the Addendum to the MND indicates. Audubon recognizes the contributions of concerned citizens in this effort, and believes that the end result is a bridge that not only meets the needs of the public, but enhances the environmental quality of Los Peñasquitos Lagoon as well.

Sincerely,



Mel Hinton  
Conservation Committee  
San Diego Audubon Society